



Anthony V. Marrocco

Public Works Commissioner
Macomb County

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Macomb Public Works Wins State Award For River Log Jam Program; Plans Underway To Attack Massive Blockages in 2011

(For additional information, contact Macomb County Public Works Environmental Engineer Lynne Seymour at (586) 307-8229)

Macomb County Public Works Commissioner Anthony V. Marrocco won a state award for an ambitious log jam removal and education program, but he isn't resting on his laurels.

Plans are already underway for another assault in 2011 on the massive log jams that block the Clinton River and its tributaries.

Last year, a record 70,000 pounds of trees, logs as well as a mountain of man-made debris was removed the North Branch and Middle Branches of the Clinton River in Clinton Township as well as the Plumbrook Drain in Sterling Heights

The successful woody debris (log jam) management program was given an honorable mention in the "innovative and excellence" category by the Michigan Association of County Drain Commissioners.

"This award is a tribute to the 150 volunteers who gave up their time on Saturdays to help clean up our rivers and drains," Commissioner Marrocco said. "I am proud to accept this award on behalf of all our volunteers. This is a very significant award."

The award-winning woody debris program included training other organizations by the Public Works staff on how to conduct stream clean ups.

"It's always nice to have your hard work recognized by another agency," said Seymour, who supervises the clean ups

"We expect to have an ambitious log jam removal program this year, too," Commissioner Marrocco said. "In fact, we have already started."

Members of the Public Works staff went on a reconnaissance trip along the North Branch of the Clinton River this week scoping out possible log jam projects, and found a giant blockage about a quarter mile from the entrance of the Nicholson Nature Center near the Public Work headquarters on Dunham and N. Rose in Clinton Township.

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The river-clogging jam didn't surprise Lynne Seymour and Barbara Matthews, two members of the scouting team. Seymour and Matthews kayaked down the North Branch last September and came across the log jam-up. It has since grown in size.

"Since the jam is now so massive we have to come up with a clear plan of attack in order to minimize environmental impacts and safety concerns," Seymour said. "It is obvious the one thing we will need is the right equipment. And we will need an army of volunteer because it is so huge."

What makes this jam up so daunting is the size and number of trees that are piled up in the river, Seymour said.

"There are many 50-foot to 150-foot long trees, 2 to 3 feet in diameter in the jam up," Seymour said.

"The reason it's important to remove these log jams is because they will lead to excessive stream bank erosion and sedimentation," Seymour said. "Log jams like this also inhibit the recreational use of the river and also prohibit fish from travelling up and down the river."

The jam ups also serve as traps for piles of man-made debris.

"We saw an awful lot of tires caught up in the log jam," Matthews said.

Commissioner Marrocco said it is important to open up the Clinton River and its tributaries for canoeing, kayaking, fishing and other recreational uses.

"The Clinton is a great river, but we can't showcase it when it's blocked with huge log jams and loads of debris," Commissioner Marrocco said. "That's why it is imperative that we accelerated these clean ups."

Seymour said the clean up dates for 2011 are June 11, July 9, Aug. 13 and Sept. 10.

People who want to volunteer for the clean ups can contact Barb Saile, of the Public Works office, at (586) 469-5337.

In other news about log jam removals, Lynne Seymour teamed up with the architect and engineering firm, Tetra Tech, Inc. to produce an impressive, 50-page field manual about dealing with major log jams. The glossy, water-proof, tear-proof booklet was funded by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The booklet, entitled "Field Manual on Maintenance of Large Woody Debris for Municipal Operation and Maintenance Crews", goes into detail about every facet connected to log jam removals.

"I'm not aware of any other such manual in Southeast Michigan," Seymour said.

The manual will be available online later this month.

Seymour said she also hopes to be able to setup workshops for municipalities and contractors that deal with woody debris management.

"We hope to get a grant to do hands-on workshops to demonstrate how to properly do woody debris management, because if you do the techniques improperly it can cause more erosion problems and loss of aquatic habitat," Seymour said.